

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (withdrawn): A method of masking at least one edge of a part of a surface that is to be treated, comprising the steps of:

using an adhesive masking strip comprising an elongate cellular material resistant to a surface treatment and at least one adhesive region, wherein the adhesive masking strip comprises at least one groove, at least part of the wall of which groove has a region inclined by an angle of less than 45° with respect to the at least one adhesive region;

applying the at least one adhesive region of said adhesive masking strip to at least part of the edge of the surface that is to be treated, by an operator guiding said strip by inserting part of at least one finger in the groove; and

detaching said adhesive masking strip after the treatment has been completed.

Claim 2 (withdrawn): The method of masking as claimed in claim 1, wherein the strip is applied by an operator constantly guiding said strip using at least one finger inserted in the groove, and wherein the at least one finger at the same time moves longitudinally along the groove and applies sufficient pressure on a part of the surface of the groove to allow the at least one adhesive region to stick to at least part of the edge of the surface that is to be treated.

Claim 3 (withdrawn): A method of painting at least part of a motor vehicle, comprising the steps of:

using an adhesive masking strip comprising an elongate cellular material resistant to a surface treatment and at least one adhesive region, wherein the adhesive masking strip comprises at least one groove, at least part of the wall of which groove has a region inclined by an angle of less than 45° with respect to the at least one adhesive region;

applying the at least one adhesive region of said adhesive masking strip to at least part of the edge of a surface of the motor vehicle that is to be treated, by an operator guiding said strip by inserting part of at least one finger in the groove;

performing a painting operation; and

detaching said adhesive masking strip after the painting operation has been completed.

Claim 4 (withdrawn): The method of painting as claimed in claim 3, further comprising a step of compressing the adhesive masking strip, which has been applied to one part of the vehicle, by another part of the vehicle.

Claim 5 (withdrawn): The method of painting as claimed in claim 4, wherein the part of the vehicle to which the adhesive masking strip is applied is a fixed part of the vehicle, and wherein the another part which compresses said strip is a moving part of the vehicle.

Claim 6 (withdrawn): The method of painting as claimed in claim 3, wherein the adhesive masking strip is applied to a fixed part of the vehicle, including the step of parting the sides of the at least one groove by a second part of the vehicle.

Claim 7 (withdrawn): The method of painting as claimed in claim 5, wherein the same shape masking strip is used to mask both a space between the bodywork and an opening leaf of the vehicle.

Claim 8 (currently amended): An adhesive masking strip comprising an elongate cellular material resistant to a surface treatment and having at least one adhesive region, said

~~wherein the adhesive masking strip comprises a body~~ cellular material having at least one groove having a rounded bottom, at least part of the wall of said groove having a region inclined by an angle of less than 45° with respect to the at least one adhesive region.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The adhesive masking strip as claimed in claim 8, which comprises ~~a half elliptical body having~~ a single said ~~guide~~ groove and two flanges situated one on each side of the groove, each said flange having an interior part and an exterior part, wherein the at least one adhesive region is situated on the exterior part of one of said flanges.

Claim 10 (currently amended): The adhesive masking strip as claimed in claim 8, wherein a cross section of said strip falls entirely inside a parallelepiped measuring 5 to 40 mm along a first side parallel to said at least one adhesive region, and 3 to 40 mm along a second side perpendicular to said at least one adhesive region, when the strip is in the uncompressed state, and wherein said strip is ~~formed of a material which is~~ able to be compressed at least by half in terms of said second side.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The adhesive masking strip as claimed in claim 9, wherein the groove has ~~is a V-shaped groove having~~ an opening angle of between 20° and 80° when the strip is not compressed.

Claim 12 (original): The adhesive masking strip as claimed in claim 11, wherein the groove bottom has a radius of curvature of between 5 and 30 mm when the strip is not compressed.

Claim 13 (original): The adhesive masking strip as claimed in claim 9, wherein when the strip is not compressed, a first angle between a surface of the interior part of the one of the flanges having the at least one adhesive region and a line parallel to the at least one adhesive region is smaller than a second angle between a surface of the interior part of another of the flanges not having the at least one adhesive region and the line parallel to the at least one adhesive region.

Claim 14 (original): The adhesive masking strip as claimed in claim 13, wherein the second angle is greater than the first angle by 3° to 30° .

Claim 15 (currently amended): The adhesive masking strip as claimed claim ~~13~~ 9, wherein, when the strip is compressed, the another flange protrudes with respect to the one flange having the at least one adhesive region.

Claim 16 (original): The adhesive masking strip as claimed in claim 9, wherein, when the strip is not compressed, the flange on which at least one adhesive region is situated has an edge situated opposite to the bottom of the groove, wherein the thickness of the edge is between 1 and 10 mm.

Claim 17 (currently amended): The adhesive masking strip as claimed in claim ~~16~~ 9, comprising a single adhesive region, wherein said adhesive region is arranged asymmetrically on the exterior part of the flange and predominantly near said edge of the flange.

Claim 18 (original): The adhesive masking strip as claimed in claim 8, wherein the elongate cellular material is a polyurethane foam.

Claim 19 (withdrawn): A method of manufacturing the adhesive masking strip comprising an elongate cellular material resistant to a surface treatment and having at least one adhesive region, wherein the adhesive masking strip comprises a body having at least one groove, at least part of the wall of said groove having a region inclined by an angle of less than 45° with respect to the at least one adhesive region, and which comprises the steps of:

- manufacturing blocks of cellular material by controlled expansion;
- cutting tapes of cellular material from the blocks;
- machining the tapes of cellular material to obtain an adhesive masking strip shape;

and

- depositing an adhesive tape along at least part of the machined tapes of cellular material so as to form at least one adhesive region.

Claim 20 (withdrawn): The method of manufacture as claimed in claim 19, and which further comprises at least one of the following additional steps:

- removing dust by at least one of blowing, brushing and suction;
- depositing a dust fixative;
- joining the tapes together by at least one of bonding and welding;
- winding at least one tape of adhesive masking strip onto at least one drum; and
- packaging at last one tape of adhesive masking strip in a parallelepipedal cardboard box.

Claim 21 (withdrawn): The method of painting as claimed in claim 6, wherein the same shape masking strip is used to mask both a space between the bodywork and an opening leaf of the vehicle.

Claim 22 (new): An adhesive masking strip comprising:

an elongate cellular material resistant to a surface treatment and at least one adhesive region, wherein the adhesive masking strip comprises at least one groove, at least part of the wall of which groove has a region inclined by an angle of less than 45° with respect to the at least one adhesive region,

wherein said strip is adapted to permit insertion of a substantial part of at least one finger in the groove to guide the strip during application thereof.

Claim 23 (new): An adhesive masking strip comprising:

an elongate cellular material resistant to a surface treatment and at least one adhesive region, wherein the adhesive masking strip comprises at least one groove, at least part of the wall of which groove has a region inclined by an angle of less than 45° with respect to the at least one adhesive region; and

at least two flanges, wherein said strip is adapted to permit said flanges to be spread or brought closer to each other during use.